



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0970TX-1 for Edgewood Independent School District of San Antonio

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	9
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The applicant has set forth a comprehensive and coherent reform vision that builds on the four core educational assurances. This is documented in chart that lists the major conceptual themes for the vision and targeted transformation. The chart lists the following conceptual themes and core assurance area alignments: engaging the digital generation (common assurance areas 1,2,4); new learning standards for a new era (common assurance areas 1,2,3,4); assessment for learning (common assurance areas 1,2,3, 4); accountability that inspires (common assurance areas 1,2,3); organizational transformation (common assurance areas 1,2,3,4). Applicant notes the following: The Power of Ten: Investing in the Future of South Texas (Consortium of 10 districts) embrace a vision building on adopting standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and to compete in the global economy; building data systems that measure student growth and success and inform teachers and principals with data about how they can improve instruction; recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining, effective teachers and principals, especially where they are needed the most; and turning around lowest-achieving schools Applicant notes that the cornerstone of the reform effort is the vision of the Texas Association of School Administrators, <i>Creating a new vision for public education in Texas</i> which speaks on learning standards that challenge and schools that prepare all children. The conceptual theme/targeted transformation chart clearly provides convincing evidence that the reform vision has the ability to accelerate student achievement; deepen student learning; increase equity. The targeted transformation descriptions for each theme add justified evidence. For example: engaging the digital generation- "through blended learning and project based learning, consortium schools will embrace the potential 21st century tools and digital content to deepen and accelerate student learning, making it vibrant, stimulating, data-informed, and personalized based on targeted needs." Example: new learning standards for a new era- "the Texas College and Career Readiness Standards will be aligned with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills in the curriculum in the form of exemplary lessons. Personalized College and Career Readiness Plans will be developed and implemented, providing opportunities for all talents and interests to be cultivated, nurtured, and valued beginning at an early age." Example: assessment for learning- "frequent, appropriate and varied assessments will inform stakeholders....blended learning provides real time, student level assessment data and opportunities for teachers to group and re group students to provide quick response to learning difficulties..." 		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Description of the process for selecting schools was clear and supported by the following: "districts selected to be part of the consortium were identified based on reasonable proximity to the lead district, and location in south Texas. The consortium districts were selected to ensure diversity that includes urban and rural schools, student populations, districts that have shown improvement the past four years, and have varied challenges that can be overcome by The Power of Ten transformation leadership approach." Applicant noted that the districts meet the eligibility requirements for the number of students exceeding 2,000 and at least 40% of participating students are from low income families according to the free and reduced lunch subsidies. Evidence: The chart in the appendix lists the participating schools by district: ten members and their respective schools (48 campuses) with demographics (Grades;# of participating educators; 3 participating students; # of high needs students; # student from low income families): Cotulla (ex: Encina-Frank Newman Middle-Cotulla HS-); Devine (ex: Devine HS-Devine Intermediate-Devine Middle); Dilley (ex. Dilley HS-Dilley EL-Mary Harper Middle); Edgewood (ex: John F Kennedy HS-Memorial HS-Brentwood Middle-Gardendale EL); Floresville (ex. North EL-Floresville Middle-South 		

EL); LaPryor (ex. La Pryor HS- EL); Natalia (ex: Natalia HS- JH- EL- Early Child Center); Pearsall (ex. Pearsall HS-JH- Intermediate); Poteet (Ex: Peteet HS-JH-EL-Intermediate); and Poth (Ex: Poth JH-HS-EL) Independent School Districts.

- Evidence: chart providing the total number of participating students (25, 454); total number participating student from low income (20, 428); total number of students that are high needs (14, 867) and the total number of participating educators (2234)

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)

10

8

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

- The applicant provides the some evidence to support how it will be scaled up and translated into meaningful reform to support district wide change beyond the participating schools. Noted that scaling up efforts will begin with each superintendent serving on the cadre of leaders team and providing lesson learned to other districts in the same geographical area. Scaling up evidence is limited- further describe the before mentioned.
- Supporting evidence was noted as "...the consortium will partner with and leverage the resources of the Education Service Center, Region 20 to create access ...and will systemically share insights to effective strategies and coach educators who are neighbors and partners in this South Texas community."
- Applicant notes that educators will impact student achievement and success leading to college and career readiness (outcome goals) by "changing the approach to how teaching and learning take place; involving parents as partners in their child's learning, implementing frequent and formative assessments to inform intervention; and integrating technology to deepen, personalize, and support the learning experience."
- Additional details were provided to support how the plan will help reach outcome goals: "implement a data tracking system, adopt standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and support teachers with tools and professional development opportunities."
- Supporting evidence:A theory of change patterned after Kotter's 8 stage change management model will be implemented. Noted the following steps for managing and leading change: 1-establish a sense of urgency; 2-create a guiding coalition; 3- develop a vision and strategy; 4- communicate the change vision; 5- empower employees; 6- generating short term wins; 7- consolidate gains and produce more change; 8-anchor new approaches in the culture.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)

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9

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

- Applicant provided sufficient and sound evidence to support the vision's likelihood of improving student learning and performance. A complete description was provided for each area (performance on summative assessments; decreasing achievement gaps; graduation rates; college enrollment and even postsecondary degree attainment) and tables in the appendix present baseline information with current information, the goals for the four year project, and goals for the year following the end of the project.
- The goals are indeed ambitious and achievable through the implementation of the vision. Each section description was supported with evidence in the form of a chart in the appendix.
- Under A) the goal is to surpass federal and state standards for student achievement; it is based on exceeding the Texas ESEA standards by subgroups, grade level and subject area; B) meeting goals will be determined by examining annual results in reading/English language arts and math assessments on the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness in grades level 3 through 8 and high school end of course assessments; C) noted that individualized learning will be strongly emphasized to decrease the achievement gap b/w subgroups. The consortium aims to exceed the top performing subgroup (whites) by 2015-16; D) current graduation rates will be reviewed and targets will be set to exceed these rates; target rates are set to exceed current state averages by subgroup; E) College enrollment-graduation requirements will be reviewed and aligned to the State of Texas college and career ready graduation requirements. Data was unavailable for student subgroups; F) Postsecondary degree attainment: although data to establish a baseline was unavailable for all partner districts, the program will result in improved student learning and performance for each participating district.
- The chart indicated the summative assessment being used as the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STARR) grades 3-8 in reading/English language arts and math; the methodology for determining status: initially growth in average raw score and the method for determining growth was initially growth in average raw score. Although some of the baseline data were not available, the charts added support to the descriptions.
- The decreasing achievement chart provided the goal area (math, reading/language arts); grade level (3-8); test language (English or Spanish); district; subgroups (AA, economically disadvantaged- free lunch; economically disadvantaged-reduce lunch; white; Hispanic; limited English proficient; special education); comparison group (white students); baseline and goals.
- The graduation rates chart demonstrated the LEA/district name; goal area-year 4 graduation; the subgroup; baseline

and goals. Baseline data for class of 2011 averaged 80%; Limited English proficient and special education subgroups held the lowest baseline %.

- The college enrollment baseline data were not available for the subgroups but the overall graduates data were available (Cotulla 34; Devine 43; Dilley 27; Edgewood 37; Floresville 43; LaPryor 50; Natalia 54; Pearsall 43; Poteet 27; and Poth 54).
- Postsecondary data per subgroup was unavailable and goals were established. Year 1 average was 30; year 2 was 35; year 3 was 40; year 4 was 45.

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	12
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is clear record of success in the past 4 years in advancing student learning and achievement and increasing equity in learning and teaching. • Tables in the appendix provided sufficient evidence of the districts/schools success as it relates to student learning outcomes and the achievement gap. The tables provide evidence of each district's performance in reading/English language arts, math, and graduation rates over the last 4 years. In summary, the performance for all students and students in subgroups of economically disadvantaged, limited English proficient, special education, and ethnicity were included to show achievement gaps between these groups. • For example: Hispanics in Dilley had a graduation rate of 61%-66.7-81-93% during 07-2011 respectively. Looking at Natalia and Pearsall, the graduation rates increased each year as well. Looking at the Math TAKS data, special education students scores increased each year in Devine, Dilley, Edgewood, and Floresville; The reading scores show a general increase each year as well. For example the economically disadvantaged subgroup in Natalia increased/remained the same from 87-91-91-91% during 07-11; in Poth they increased three years and dropped by 3% during the 10-11 school year. • Further details noted that "high levels of participation in students, particularly for economically disadvantaged and under represented students in advanced academic measures such as PSAT, SAT, ACT, AP, ASVAB and Dual Credit." On the SAT/ACT participation rates in 2010, 6 of 10 districts demonstrated participation rates exceeding the state average of 52.7% for Hispanic students. • Identified none of the schools as persistently lowest achieving schools but noted that two schools have been determined as priority schools and have improvement plans. Data was provided for all 10 districts but lacked some information on the districts with the two schools. Performances appear to be uneven. • Provided sufficient and clear evidence to demonstrate how student data is made available. Indicated that districts offer availability of information about student progress through parent portals that include training for parents on how to access and then interpret the information; student report cards are issued every 6 to 9 weeks; student progress reports are sent every three weeks; data are announced via broadcasting systems; direct mail to parents of assessment results; parents and students can access progress online through txGradebook system; data rooms (WARooms). 		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	2
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence related to increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments was limited. The applicant provided the bare minimum (a description of the school level expenditures from State and local funds). • The applicant noted that "the state of Texas reports school district for the F33 survey using the F33 survey format based on the information the district are required to provide that includes sources, expenditures, that include salaries and employee benefits and the number of students based on fall enrollment numbers." This description is insufficient. The applicant did not provide any charts or tables to support this description. Charts and/or tables would have provided support and a more convincing argument. • Actual personnel salaries for instructional staff only are posted by the district, by school, on the district's websites and presented in several public forums. The AEIS report contains expenditures data by school and includes salaries for instructional and professional support staff. • The descriptions did not provide sufficient/complete evidence of increasing transparency. 		

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The LEA has demonstrated some evidence of successful conditions and sufficient autonomy under state legal, statutory and regulatory requirements. • Applicant notes that "the legal, statutory and regulatory conditions necessary for each LEA to successfully implement the personalized learning environments described in the proposal begin with the authority granted in the State's Constitution Article 7, Section 1 of the Texas Constitution" and the Texas Education Code (TEC). • Further evidence: TEC "directs how public education in Texas will work to meet the following objectives: involve parents...; challenge students to meet their full educational potential; prevent dropouts; ensure a well balanced and appropriate curriculum; prepare students to be thoughtful, active...; recruit, develop, and retain qualified ...personnel..." • Supporting details: The TEC provides general provisions which establish sufficient autonomy for each LEA: the provisions include accreditation; responsibility of school districts for public education; organization; accreditation status; determination of accreditation status or performance rating. • In 2012- all participating LEA's were cited as "accredited." 		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	8
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant provided sufficient and sound evidence of stakeholder engagement and support. • Students, families, teachers, and principals participated in several activities in the development of this proposal; Activities included attending forums held to engage students and families in the decision making process- these forums included district family nights, campus parental involvement sessions, parent teacher association meetings. Each venue participates were able to provide feedback, ask questions, and offer comments or recommendations. • District superintendents shared the plan and vision with principals, teachers, staff and professional development staff. Principals in turn participated in planning groups that involved the superintendents, directors of curriculum, technology directors, career and technical education directors, federal program directors, and assistant superintendents • The approach taken demonstrates the effort the LEAs made to have buy in from all stakeholders and players. • Convincing evidence was provided to show support of at least 70% of teachers in support of the proposal. This evidence is presented in the form of a survey that asks "do you support the proposed RTTproject". Results indicate that 87% of the teachers surveyed are in favor. The teacher validation surveys (in the appendix) show the following information: school name, number of teachers in the campus, number of teachers surveyed, # yes, #no, % yes. • Examples to support the data provided in the chart: Edgewood- 82% yes; Pearsall- 92% yes; LaPryor-100% yes; etc. Data clearly show at least 70% of teachers in favor; Additional data was found that included the superintendent's signature validating the data per district (Cotulla 95% yes; Devine 90% yes;) • Letters of support were found in the appendix from various stakeholders; Some included the Lion's Club Chapter Organization to the local Chambers of Commerce; after school programs like 21st Century and After school all stars program; all mayors from each district (10); the Texas Association of School Business Officials; the Texas Association of School Administrators, Catholic Charities; the Girl Scouts of SW Texas, the University of Texas- San Antonio, Alamo Community College District • All letters support reflect a solid commitment to student achievement and are in favor of the opportunities the grant offers students and teachers • Did not see where the proposal mentioned how the proposal was revised based on the feedback and engagement of the students, families, and teachers/principals. 		
(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	4
<p>(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant provides a complete analysis of the common needs and gaps within the consortium based on the needs assessment. These include - "credit recovery interventions often impact students too slowly and are employed too late to have maximum impact on students before they get too far behind their peers in the accrual of graduation credits; many partners LEAs are currently lacking data analysis systems that can fully measure student growth and success over time; the rural partner LEAs have experienced challenges in recruiting qualified teachers for core subject areas competing directly with the districts in the San Antonio metro area; especially rural LEAs have been experiencing difficulty to keep up with professional development due to staff capacity limitations inherent in the size of the partner districts..." • Notes the needs identified will be addressed in the plan and the project manager will be the primary point of contact. The project manager will work with the project specialist; the project data coordinator to collect additional information related to these needs and gaps. 		

- The districts currently review practices and determine individual needs for personalized learning at each campus through comprehensive needs assessments; 9 week performance reviews; program and project evaluations; and WARooms.
- The applicant demonstrated evidence of a high quality plan for an analysis of its current status in implementing personalized learning environments and the logic behind the reform proposal contained within the proposal. Therefore, a score of 4 is given.

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	15
(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant provided an achievable and innovative approach to learning that engages and empowers all learners, in particular high-need students, in an age-appropriate manner. The approach consists of a series of initiatives including: implementation of thinking/learning maps as a powerful learning strategy in all classrooms; development of thinking maps mapping each child's future and creation of college and career readiness plans; making college feel real; transition to blended learning and project based learning; and better use of data to drive instruction. • Provided descriptions of each initiative. Thinking maps will be "utilized as a powerful instructional strategy system wide ...as a common visual language that provides concrete representations of abstract thoughts....in creating thinking maps to visualize their future, set long term and short term goals." Provided flow charts of the thinking maps. • The applicant provided details about the college and career readiness plans. "The emphasis at the first grade level is to engage young minds in developmentally appropriate early literacy activities that will ensure all students are reading on grade level by 3rd grade. At 3rd grade, the emphasis shifts to applying these skills to master age-appropriate benchmarks for the grade-level Texas College and Career Readiness standards,..." The applicant provided insufficient evidence that demonstrates the accommodations and high quality strategies for high needs students (special education students in particular) to ensure that they are on track toward meeting college and career ready standards. • Support: College and career ready plans will be personalized road maps that will enable students, teachers, and parents to pinpoint appropriate learning experiences toward mastery of state and national standards. Making college feel real-"existing partnerships with community colleges and universities will be expanded, focused, and leveraged in order to provide students with additional opportunities to engage in courses required for incoming freshman. Both are innovative and convincing approaches to learning. • Other evidence was described in the transition to blended learning and project based learning: using technology so students can self pace and teachers can differentiate description. This transition will "allow the use of digital content where students move at their own pace....blended learning provides a platform where students can get 1-1 instruction and practice with digital content, allowing more effective time with their teachers." • Technology boot camps will be required for parents and students to attend-evidence of support for initiative. Other evidence is the homework, project, and technology center that will support student and family engagement in learning beyond the classroom walls and hours. The center will provide tutoring and homework assistance in addition to resources such as games, flashcards, literacy materials for parents and students. 		
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	16
(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence to support an approach to teaching and leading that helps educators improve instruction and increase their capacity to support student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready standards or college- and career-ready graduation requirements was provided in the following sections: transformation to personalized learning; coaching educators to excel and inspire; informed by data at the speed of thought; educator evaluations systems to ensure student success; aligning curriculum to standards through exemplary lessons; partnering with experts to create in-home expertise. • "...transform learning from teachers delivering instruction to teachers facilitating differentiated instruction based on students needs, performance, and interests through shifting to a blended learning model" • Evidence to support all educators engaged in training and in professional teams or communities can be documented by the professional development. Teachers will have professional development that teaches them how to "manage rotations in their classrooms, plan differentiated lessons based on student needs and career interests, layer digital content with resources created by the consortium, and analyze real time data. Training will include coaching teachers, 		

leading transformations in the classroom, effectively integrating college and career readiness standards into the curriculum.

- Evidence to support information, from such sources as the district's teacher evaluation system, that helps school leaders and school leadership teams assess, and take steps to improve, individual and collective educator effectiveness and school culture and climate, was provided. The evaluation system description noted that the system will employ a 60-40 percent breakdown with 60% being observed and 40 being directly linked to student performance data.
- Training, systems, and practices to continuously improve school progress toward the goals of increasing student performance and closing achievement gaps can be seen by the aligning curriculum to standards through exemplary lessons. In this college and career readiness standards will be embedded into the curriculum at each grade level. Teachers will collaborate to identify skills, content, strategies, processes, and experiences that are pre-requisites to success.
- Applicant provided insufficient/missing evidence to support *a high-quality plan for increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals (as defined in this notice), including in hard-to-staff schools, subjects (such as mathematics and science), and specialty areas (such as special education).*

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	13
(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant provides a clear and logic overview of the project's s policy and infrastructure. Supported by: the 10 superintendents will oversee the districts' to ensure implementation of the programs and initiatives are in order. Edgewood's superintendent (the lead district) will provide program oversight. The program director will be the director of research, evaluation, and information systems/federal and state programs at Edgewood. This individual will give 25% of time but the program manager, specialist, data specialist, and accountant will devote 100% of their time to the project. Supporting evidence: an organizational chart, CVs for individuals on the chart and job descriptions for the new positions. • The consortium governance structure is appropriate and demonstrates evidence that services and support will be applied to all schools. " each district will have participation expectations...each district will have shared roles with responsibilities that are consistent to the purpose....project resources will be shared among the districts and roles may be differentiated so one district's strength is shared with the other district's to ensure equitable and excellent implementation....decision making will be the primary role of the superintendent's leadership group (Board)...the Board will determine the appropriate protocols to follow; the lead district will incur expenses as applicable...a memo of understanding was executed by each district." • The district and school leadership teams will include the principals, educators, support staff, students; community and businesses. The teams will be allowed and encouraged to design sufficient flexibility and autonomy over schedules, calendars, personnel decisions, etc- teams will be expected to carry out program tasks and activities. • Student progression will be based on mastery, not seat time. The evidence here is insufficient but supported by the statement, " that options include digital coursework, in school and beyond school walls and schedules, self paced and teacher directed credit by exam, virtual courses, college credit. • The universal review system will be mechanism in which accommodations will be designed monitored and evaluated. Noted that the dual language program will be expanded. No evidence as to how this will be combined or aligned to other language learning systems. 		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	7

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

- The applicant commented that all participating students, parents, educators will have access to the necessary content, tools, resources to support implementation of the proposal. The evidence provided is vague. "the programs identified for college and career readiness...will be implemented and integrated within each school in each district within the consortium establishing program focused learning communities that center on personalized learning environments"
- Evidence that technical support will be available is supported by "parent/student technology camps will be held to best take advantage of hand held devices that students will take home to extend learning beyond the school day." Homework, Technology, and Project Centers will be established and open outside school hours and weekends to provide access to WiFi and tech resources. An expert staff to assist in their use . Power of Ten Parent Conferences and workshops will provide help on specific topics related to program initiatives, college and career preparation. Other tech

support will involve the trainings for parents, online, peer support, and local school support.

- As it relates to information technology for parents and students, evidence is insufficient. Applicant notes that the student information system currently in place are able to export student data, course enrollment, grades, etc. Information about the system specifically was missing.
- Based on the evidence provided, it is clear that the applicant has a high quality plan. Although there is insufficient evidence as it relates to the use of information technology systems, the details warrant a score of 7.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	13
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of a coherent and justifiable continuous plan was provided with support. The continuous improvement process was charted out by the superintendents and will be modified as collaborations begin with the strategic advisory council. The navigation will include data inspection, analysis, and evaluation. • A strategy for implementing a process that provides timely and regular feedback was provided. The leadership of the Power of Ten will meet the superintendent of EISD who will create a Board of Trustees. The Board will meet once a month while the strategic planning committee/advisory board will meet at least quarterly to ensure all details of implementation, to inspect progress, and to ensure continuous communication loops among leaders, practitioners and stakeholders. • The applicant clearly notes that the Board "working committees of the strategic planning team, and the program staff...will work with all consortium educators to address the project strategy by doing this work, impacting students so they reach their target of achieving college and career readiness by the time they graduate from high school"- This clearly demonstrates the regular feedback process toward meeting the goals and monitoring corrections. Regular and continuous review by the project board will eliminate and reduce problems expanding into huge obstacles. • The continuous improvement approach is called plan-do-check-adjust; this plan provides a framework to ensure the program remains on task, within budget and on time towards meeting the project goals and outcomes. • In regards to publicly sharing the information, the applicant mentions board meeting that will be published a year at a time with any changes published at least 10 days in advance of public awareness; monthly budget expenditures report will be made public so all stake holders can review to see the use of funds and determine the quality of use of grant funds. • Overall the continuous improvement plan is sound and convincing. 		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	4
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence to support ongoing communication and engagement includes the distribution of Power of Ten information in electronic and paper newsletters that will be disseminated to staff and parents. These newsletters will be made available via Wikis, the Power of Ten website, through local churches, businesses, and community organizations. • Another way the applicant showed ongoing communication was through the local media in the form of press releases (radio, newspaper, television). • Brochures with project information will be distributed at parent and community meetings and video briefs will be played in public locations. • Internal and external stakeholders will be invited to be a part of a list serv that will include information and access to data related information. This will include a data dashboard and a Wiki through which stakeholders can access information and provide input. • Another means to create the communication would be through the district phone system. This will provide parents with the option to receive voice and text messages regarding events and progress. • Provided sufficient and convincing evidence to support communication strategies but more details/support are needed for ongoing engagement strategies with internal and external stakeholders. 		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	4
(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:		

- Evidence clearly demonstrates the applicants' plan to continuously improve. Ambitious yet achievable performance measures, by subgroup, along with the baseline and target data were provided in the appendix.
- Provided 15 clear and attainable performance measures in a table found in the Appendix. These measures included: all applicants-highly effective teachers/principals; all applicants-effective teacher/principal; all applicants- performance on summative state testing; PreK-3- students developed in early literacy skills; PreK-3-strengths and difficulties questionnaire; grades 4-8 and 9-12- on track indicator-students with 90%attendance; grades 4-8 and 9-12-on track indicator-students without disabilities referrals entering the State record; grades 4-8-students passing the STARR reading and math in grades 3-8; grades 4-8 and 9-12--student engagement instrument; grades 9-12-students completing FAFSA applications; grades 9-12-students earning graduation credits on time for graduation; grades 9-12-students completing advanced dual credit courses; grades 9-12-students passing STARR EOCs English language arts and math; grades 9-12-average ACT and SAT scores; grades 9-12-Juniors and Seniors taking the ACT or SAT.
- The applicant provided supporting evidence through descriptions/summaries of the measures in the proposal body. "In grades 3-8 the consortium will specifically evaluate the extent to which teachers and principals are able to increase the passing achievement level from the previous year for each of their students." "...the consortium will utilize passing rates on the STARR in all grade levels"; "...the strengths and difficulties questionnaire ..assesses a students status in five dimensions: emotional, conduct problems, hyperactivity/inattention, peer relationship problems; and prosocial behavior."
- Evidence to support the provision of formative information is "each performance measure will be part of the project specific data tracking initiative led by the data coordinator and with the guidance and assistance of the contracted data expert with a system that is available to all districts and compatible with all district information systems and technology."
- Performance measure review and improvement is clear and attainable. The project board of trustees will task the project staff with understanding the challenges and developing solutions. Each district will collect data and develop a report of their projects' efforts on a monthly basis. The reports will be the check points that will provide info to help gauge progress. The data coordinator will lead annual reviews to ensure that progress is being made on a specific measure.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)

5

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(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

- Plans to evaluate the effectiveness of Race to the Top – District funded activities, such as professional development and activities that employ technology, and to more productively use time, staff, money, or other resources in order to improve results, through such strategies as improved use of technology, working with community partners, compensation reform, and modification of school schedules and structures (e.g., service delivery, school leadership teams (as defined in this notice), and decision-making structures) was presented with some evidence.
- The applicant noted that an external evaluator with experience in education and college and career readiness would be contracted in order to evaluate the effectiveness of investments. This is a logical and appropriate piece of evidence. His or her role would include leading formal evaluation efforts through ongoing analysis and review of program data, monthly reports, and all relevant info generated; review all formative evaluations that take place through the continuous improvement plan; examine the programs progress on implementing the evaluation system.
- The evidence provided only spoke of the evaluator and his or her roles in evaluating effectiveness of investments. Evidence to elaborate the above mentioned would have been more helpful in understanding how specifically the RTT activities would be evaluated.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	9

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

- The overall budget looks justifiable and supported with a request of RTT-D funds at \$39, 882, 815 for six projects for 10 districts and \$1,757,680 from other sources (totaling: \$41,640,495). Personnel assuming majority of the budget over the 4 years: \$16,275,800.
- The budget for each project (management/evaluation; instructional coaches; college readiness; leadership project; blended learning/project based learning; and parent and community engagement) looks appropriate. The data show the blended learning project as the leading project with a total budget of \$18,461,872; followed by the instructional coach project at \$10,942,522.
- All funds are identified and will the support the project: For the management and evaluation project, other funding will

provide \$723,600; the sources were clearly identified as "the consortium will contribute a portion of existing staff time as follows: Edgewood project leader...totaling .10FTE, Edgewood project manager with salary and benefits at .25FTE, and each district will contribute a .25FTE designated staff person." The instructional coaches will get \$102,000 from other sources-Title 1a will fund materials and presenters for summer coaches institute; College and Career Prep- will receive funding (352,080) from the state to pay for software licenses for student electronic coursework and fees for AP exams.

- Each budget and narrative is reasonable and provides sufficient support to justify its claims. For example the leadership project provides a detailed description of how travel monies will be spent (leadership and learning center travel); how contractual money will be allotted for leadership development; presentation of book on leadership; etc).
- One area of concern is the instructional coaches budgeted amounts. For 49 coaches, the numbers were not justified in the narrative. Year 1 1.4 million; Year 2 and Year 3 2.8 million; and Year 4 1.4 million. More details as to how these numbers were calculated would be helpful.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	9
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

- Sustainability of the projects goals are described and supported with a three year sustainability chart.
- Evidence included the following measures: retention of educators so they can be mentors and coaches for the next generation of educators; instructional coaches would be internal experts and trainers so fewer dollars will be needed for consultants and travel to PD activities;
- The sustainability budget chart shows funding sources such as Title 1 and Title 2 will soak up the cost for instructional coaches, educator, coach and leader professional development; local funds will pay for leadership staff; the power of 10 board meetings; membership in school transformation network and ongoing coaching for senior leaders. Title 1a and state compensatory education and local funds will take the cost for technology hardware replacement plans, digital content for blending learning, while E-rate and local funds will sustain the technology infrastructure and services.
- In addition, the plan for sustainability notes that state high school allotment funds could sustain the PSAT/PLAN administration and data analysis for all 10th and 11th grade students in addition to the PSAT and SAT/ACT boot camps for students.
- Applicant notes that that "critical initiatives will be funded by redirecting state, local, and federal revenues from current expenditures that will no longer be required following the transformation....For those initiatives that have shown to have the greatest impact, the districts will integrate the costs in the districts' annual budgeting process."

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	8

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

- Evidence: The applicant identified 6 population-level desired results for students in the consortium of LEAs that align with and support the applicant's broader Race to the Top – District proposal. These population groups included students entering K; students taking the STARR assessment in grade level three; students grades 4-12; all high school students; high school juniors and seniors; and graduating high school seniors. The desired results included rising rates of students with age appropriate development levels in early literacy; rising rates of students passing the reading state assessment in grade level 3; rising rates of student engagement at their respective campuses; rising levels of student enrolling in advanced and dual credit courses; rising average on ACT and SAT for high school juniors and seniors; and rising rates of students graduating on the recommended or distinguished achievement high school graduation.
- Evidence supporting a coherent and sustainable partnership with public or private organizations includes the relationship with the Annie Casey Foundation's Making Connections for the past 10 years. The Connections "created a comprehensive community school network to support community wide transformation process in which the school district partnered with city and community organizations to expand the access of students and their families to services that strengthen the family and improve student academic achievement."
- Making Connections also partners with local nonprofit agencies and the 21st century program and as a result students have extended academic time. "Students have the opportunity to participate in community learning centers projects for up to 2.5 additional hours each school day. This detail provided evidence/support to the strategies used to scale the model beyond the participating students.
- The applicant provided details about the expansion of the school nurse services in Edgewood ISD as evidence of initiatives implemented to improve child educational outcomes. "This simple strategy has proven to be an effective

system utilized within the Edgewood Independent School District that provides students and their families with opportunities to connect health (physical, mental/emotional and social) with education. This provides some evidence of how the partnership would integrate education and other services in Edgewood but not in the other 9 districts.

- Assessing students needs will involve several efforts. Each district will employ the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) to assess each child on five dimensions: emotional, conduct problems, hyperactivity/inattention, peer relationships, and pro-social behavior. "Students identified as being below grade level or with low scores ...will receive additional support through each partner districts' Response to Intervention (Rtl) system." Other efforts include the STAAR reading assessments, average ACT and SAT scores, the number of students earning college credit through advanced courses and dual credit courses, and the number of students graduating.
- Applicant did not provide adequate evidence to demonstrate how the partnership and LEA would build capacity of staff in participating schools by providing them tools and supports to create a decision-making process and infrastructure to select, implement, and evaluate supports that address the individual needs of participating students and support improved results and engage parents and families in both decision-making about solutions to improve results over time and in addressing student, family, and school needs. The applicant noted, "each partner will participate in the decision process to execute particular student supports will include the feedback from families to ensure that provided supports match the perceived needs of parents and families of participating students in each of the Consortium district communities. Capacity building will be provided directly to Consortium districts both through project staff and staff from partnering agencies."
- The applicant provided performance measures for the proposed population-level in the form of a table in the appendix. The performance measures were achievable and ambitious for each of the participating schools.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

- This proposal meets absolute priority 1. Evidence is provided in the clear plan of operation which provides a timeline (by year and quarter within the year) of each activity along with the person(s) responsible. For example, year 1 will consist of the establishment of the board of superintendents; recruit, interview, and hire project management staff; set up budget; Year 2, will consist of the ordering, receiving, and setting up of technology, equipment, and supplies, contract and test programming of integrated data system; Year 3- design teacher principal and superintendent evaluation systems; and Year 4- hold quarterly strategic planning committee meetings and working tasks teams; initiate membership and participate in TASA school transformation network.
- Evidence: the conceptual themes and targeted transformations are clear and achievable. These included engaging the digital generations; new learning standards for a new era; assessment for learning; accountability that inspires; operational transformation.
- Description of the process for selecting schools was clear and supported by the following: "districts selected to be part of the consortium were identified based on reasonable proximity to the lead district, and location in south Texas. The consortium districts were selected to ensure diversity that includes urban and rural schools, student populations, districts that have shown improvement the past four years, and have varied challenges that can be overcome by The Power of Ten transformation leadership approach." Applicant noted that the districts meet the eligibility requirements for the number of students exceeding 2,000 and at least 40% of participating students are from low income families according to the free and reduced lunch subsidies.
- Applicant provided an achievable and innovative approach to learning that engages and empowers all learners, in particular high-need students, in an age-appropriate manner. The approach consists of a series of initiatives including: implementation of thinking/learning maps as a powerful learning strategy in all classrooms; development of thinking maps mapping each child's future and creation of college and career readiness plans; making college feel real; transition to blended learning and project based learning; and better use of data to drive instruction.

Total	210	173
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0970TX-2 for Edgewood Independent School District of San Antonio

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	9
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant sets out a comprehensive and coherent reform vision that is clearly tied to the four core educational assurance areas. They outline 5 Conceptual Themes - Engaging the Digital Generation; New Learning Standards for a New Era; Assessment by Learning; Accountability that Inspires; and Organizational Transformation - that each explicitly address a minimum of three of the assurance areas. They propose to accelerate student learning by providing blended learning opportunities (both traditional and digital) that will be aligned to the Texas College and Career Readiness Standards. Each student will have a Personalized College and Career Readiness Plan and classrooms will be equipped with Thinking/Learning Maps that will deepen understanding and provide students with information to guide modifications of the own PCCRPs. Student assessment will also guide both accountability and the development of the PCCRPs, and teachers will be provided with modeling and coaching to implement new methods of teaching. Accountability will be enhanced by implementing the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program. The plan proposes to reform both central office modes of operation and empower school level teachers and administrators to increase collaborative decision-making and action. There is no explicit narrative to discuss the vision for accelerating student achievement, though it is implied in the personalizing of learning and attention to formative assessment and performance monitoring. This is a mid-high score</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has chosen to include 100% of students from the 48 school campuses representing the 10 districts. More than 2/3 of the schools (N=34) have 80% or greater of their participating students coming from low-income families. As a consortium, the applicant clearly meets the competition's eligibility requirements. The schools are listed in the appendix with the numbers of participating students identified by school and disaggregated by low-income and high need designations. By including 100% of all students, the consortium's implementation of their plan with fidelity is likely to support high-quality LEA- and school-level reform. This is a high score</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	9
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The consortium will be including all schools in the ten districts in their reform plan; therefore, scaling up within the districts is moot. However, the applicant identifies 24 additional LEAs/districts that have similar challenges and they propose to work with the with the regional educational service center (ESC-20) to share lessons learned and insights with their neighboring districts. The applicant also states that they will implement their program by implmenting Kotter's 8-stage change management model. The appendices (Plan of Operation on pp. 6-10) include charts identifying key goals, persons responsible and the deliverables by quarter of the implementation of the grant. Taken together, these qualify the response as a high score for the likelihood of the applicant being successful in implementing a high-quality plan.</p>		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	8
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant is challenged in presenting hard data for goals since their state assessments are in a state of development and scores have not been set. For historically underperforming schools, however, setting the goal of exceeding state average performance on all subtests and for subgroups is an ambitious and achievable goal. In addressing achievement gaps, the</p>		

applicants' goal exceeding the top-performing subgroup by the end of the grant will meet the expectation of closing the gap and provide a measure that will require different trajectories for different subgroups, thus increasing equity among participating students. The stated intention not only to reduce drop-outs but increase college and career readiness are both laudable goals. Ongoing progress review and earlier identification of students at risk are both strategies that have the potential to impact these statistics. The appendices provide goals for postsecondary enrollment that indicate in most instances a goal of modest increases in enrollment (1-3% per annum) but provides no narrative or rationale for these goals. The consortium chose to include postsecondary attainment with an expressed intent to track these numbers through the National Student Clearinghouse. The lack of a rationale for the goals for college enrollment qualifies this as a low high-range score.

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	11
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>As could be expected in a reform this wide-ranging (10 districts, 48 schools), there is some inconsistency in terms of the record of success of different districts and schools with regard to specific student performance overall or within particular subgroups. The applicant makes a compelling case, however, that, given the demographic challenges of the consortium members, the districts and schools have a record of achievement upon which they can build. The design of the collaborative has the potential to support differentially-performing districts and schools to learn from each other in moving forward. Most compelling to this reviewer are several achievements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 of the 10 districts achieved participation rates exceeding state averages on advanced academic measures among Hispanic students • Half of the districts were able to reduce achievement gaps in reading/ELA to state averages or increase their performance advantage; 40% of districts were able to do the same in math • 70% of districts have increased numbers of graduates with academic honors • 90% of districts have higher graduation rates for Hispanic students than state averages • 40% of districts outperformed state averages on reading/ELA tests among LEP students <p>These successes must be tempered with some individual school data that shows declines over four years in indicators, like graduation rates, among some of the subgroups of interest in particular districts (e.g., Cotulla ISD decreased graduation rates among LEP students by 25% and lost ground to state averages by 37%; a similar but less dramatic trend was seen in the special education graduation rates of 13% and 20%, respectively)</p> <p>The applicant states that none of the schools are by definition persistently low-performing but identified two schools as in school improvement. They refer to these schools' data as being reflected in the appendices but did not identify which schools these were so that it was impossible to distinguish them from the other schools in the chart. Therefore, this reviewer could not infer whether there is any evidence to determine their achievement of ambitious and significant reforms in these schools.</p> <p>Student performance data are made available to stakeholders in differentially appropriate ways depending upon the audience. Parents are provided multiple ways of getting data from schools, including parent portals (with training for how to access and interpret), student report cards, student progress reports, and an online gradebook system. One of the initiatives in the grant is the Wonderful Assessment Rooms (WARooms) for disseminating and analyzing student data; several of the schools are reported to currently have WARooms and teachers and administrators make use of the data to make instructional decisions regarding individuals and groups of students.</p> <p>The gaps cited in some of the areas led this response to be a high mid-range score.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	5
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant cites their transparency in processes, practices and investments by making public the categories required in this section. The State of Texas reports school district data for the F-33 survey. The Texas Accountability Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) is currently posted by each of the districts and provides actual personnel salaries for instructional staff, teachers and non-personnel expenditures disaggregated by school. This demonstrates a high level of transparency and reflects a high score.</p>		

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant cites the legal, statutory and regulatory requirements provided by the state's constitution and the Texas Education Code (TEC). The mission of public education, under the TEC, is to ensure that all Texas children have access to a quality education that will enable them to achieve their potential and fully participate as citizens. Personalized learning environments as described in this application clearly will enable children in these districts to thrive and meet the mission requirements of a quality public education. The TEC also has provisions that reflect the need for complying with requirements to determine the effectiveness of schools based upon their education of subgroups, and the requirement to report data through the state's system. These and other statutory requirements are aligned with the consortium's proposal. This is a high score.</p>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	8
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides evidence of wide-ranging support. Their narrative describes a multivariate approach to gathering support. Parents and students in each of the 10 districts were invited to forums where the intent to propose was presented. Other meetings, such as Family Nights, Campus Parental Involvement sessions, PTA meetings, were also held at which community members were provided information on the competition. The statement was made that the proposal was revised based on feedback but no specific examples were provided. Superintendents shared the Power of Ten vision with their administrative staffs and went to schools/campuses to gather support for the proposal. Principals and other administrators formed the nucleus of the planning teams and provided feedback on the implications of some of the reform initiatives. Because the districts are not subject to collective bargaining, teachers were provided information on the proposal and were able to vote on whether they wanted to see this pursued. Consortium-wide approval was reported as 87% and evidence of district votes were provided in the appendices. The mayor of each city provided letters of support, as did a variety of community groups. The applicant provided 38 individual letters of support representing each of the 10 communities. This is a low high-range score.</p>		
(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	1
<p>(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant describes a number of needs and gaps that exist that are typical of those one would expect from districts with the demographic makeup of those in the consortium. For example, they identify the difficulty that some of the rural districts have in recruiting and retaining highly-qualified teachers in core subject areas and the struggle that these same districts have with providing relevant cultural experiences for their students because of the rurality. They also cite the need in most of the districts to improve the delivery of more personalized interventions for struggling students. While it appears that the applicant has a sense of the challenges that the consortium faces, they do not provide a high-quality plan that identifies either: a) the way in which they determined the needs that they reported; or b) the action plan to take on a comprehensive needs assessment upon funding. There is no timeline, no indication of responsible parties and no specific deliverables or activities. Therefore, this response is rated as low-range.</p>		

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	18
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides a five-point plan to encourage all learners to be empowered within a personalized learning environment. Thinking/Learning Maps will be used in all Classrooms and will be developed with the input of parents to map each child's future and set short and long term goals for career and college readiness plans (CCRP); these will begin at the beginning of each school year for all children, including those identified as most at risk (the applicant cites 80% of students as economically disadvantaged and nearly 60% of PK students as entering school at-risk of dropping out of school). Parents will be involved in annual career and technology conferences at which plans can be revised based upon the latest student data. The Thinking/Learning Maps will help students set plans by understanding what they need to learn and what the steps are to accomplish their goals. CCRPs will begin in grade one and, by making use of the integrated data system, parents, students and educators will be able to monitor progress toward goals and make adjustments necessary to impact individual student learning. CCRPs will be updated a minimum of twice/year.</p>		

The overall learning initiative calls for emphasis in PK-3rd grade to focus on students' age-appropriate development of literacy skills in order to master benchmark standards at the ensuing middle grade levels informed by Texas CCR standards. In high school, the attention shifts to mastery of skills and academic content within the context of student-selected career clusters. This appears to be a coherent plan that, if implemented with fidelity, can help students master academic content within a personalized context that allows them to explore topics of both group and individual interest.

The emphasis on blended learning with technology enhancements provides students with a variety of instructional approaches and environments that can support individual learning. This is further enhanced by existing partnerships cited with universities and community colleges that are intended to help students make "college feel real." These partnerships will prioritize students in the consortium for admission in them and enable them to earn industry certifications in high-need fields, such as the oil and gas industry, that can prepare students for careers upon graduation.

As students transition to blended learning to engage in project-based applications of their learning, the applicant cites the benefit of using technology so that students are able to self pace through competencies and teachers can differentiate instruction based upon skills and interests. The blended model will be phased into the core content areas and the applicant has operationally defined what it means (e.g., at least 25% of time will be spent accessing digital content). Blended learning will be accomplished with the use of tablet technology and white boards. The tablet technology will allow students to work on assignments and submit them electronically to teachers who can provide feedback. This will also allow parents and students to track progress in real time.

Mechanisms, including technology boot camp and Homework, Project and Technology Center, are in place to provide support to students and families even beyond the school day. The Center will be open four evenings/week and on Saturday, providing students and parents with access to technology; at these times, homework help will be available to support student learning.

This high-quality plan addresses timelines and identifies personnel responsible for the activities in bringing it to fruition. The only element that appears lacking is explicit reference to how students will be exposed to diverse cultures, contexts and perspectives. This is a mid high-range score.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)

20

15

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The consortium structure itself has the potential to help schools within it to build capacity to support personalized student learning by leveraging intra- and inter-school and district communities of practice to learn from each other, as described in the narrative. The consortium will provide support to teachers in the forms of PD and coaching that will enable them to shift to a blended learning mode of operation that will require changes in instruction and classroom practice in integrating technology in order to differentiate instruction and manage classroom structures to build on students' individual interests and skills. The training will also include training on how to layer digital content with resources created by consortium members and teams and helping students to develop and manage their personalized learning maps, as well as PD to help educators analyze real time data. Consortium members agree to hire exemplary teachers to coach their peers to higher levels of performance while implementing the new models of classroom instruction; three other teachers will be hired to act as consortium coaches specific to supporting implementation of technology resources within the grant. That the exemplary teachers will be hired from within current staff at each school and will gain additional PD and experience in coaching peers is another example of how the grant will build capacity of educators. Coaches and other consortium teams will design exemplary lessons that identify skills, content, strategies, processes and experiences that are necessary to meeting CCR standards in specific content areas.

The professional development will be ongoing and site-based with the implementation of the *See One, Try One, Do One* model of teachers learning from experts, co-teaching with the experts, then receiving support and feedback from their school coaches. School administrators will also participate in these learning sessions so that they can become more knowledgeable of what is being learned and implemented so that they can better support the changes in the classroom. In addition to the technology tools already mentioned, educators will have access to the web-based data dashboards and will receive training in their use in supporting and facilitating student learning that meets individual needs.

The consortium members will develop educator evaluation systems that will help identify educator skills and help to target PD and training to the needs of the educators. The system will be based on a 60/40 ratio of observation to student performance data, respectively. This, in combination with the partnering with experts, is designed to increase the number of effective and highly effective teachers working with students. No explicit mention was made of how the reform will address hard-to-staff schools and subjects, some of which was mentioned earlier as an issue, especially for some of the rural schools in the district. This omission was taken into account by this reviewer and was mitigated somewhat by the comprehensive nature of the plan's intent to improve teaching in all consortium buildings with high-quality training and coaching and the formation of learning communities. Therefore, the score was a low high-range one.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	13

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The consortium has a high-quality plan that supports project implementation through policies, practices and rules that have the potential to facilitate personalized learning by:

- Establishing clear policies and protocols for the operation and management of the consortium. These include clear roles and responsibilities for each member, establishing decision rules on shared management (e.g., lead district can break a tie by invoking a second vote on particular issues relevant to the consortium), clearly delineating procurement and the sharing of resources for equitable allocation of materials, etc. These agreements provide a clear governance structure.
- School leadership teams are expected to carry out program activities and the narrative supports that they will be given sufficient autonomy and flexibility to do so by determining factors such as school schedules, calendars, and personnel decisions.
- Students will be based on mastery of content rather than seat time and will be provided with multiple opportunities to catch up in their learning if they fall behind through multiple avenues, including digital course work, teacher-directed credit by exam, college course work, etc. No mention was made about students accelerating their learning but the use of college course work as one avenue seems to imply this.
- Students will be provided daily opportunities to demonstrate development of specific skills and will be provided with summative assessments a minimum of once every nine weeks through a consortium-developed assessment of skill mastery.
- The consortium members will use the Universal Review System (URS) process to implement accommodations for individual students to increase access to appropriate adaptations of resources and practices. The applicant identifies the Edgewood ISD dual language program as an example of a program that assists ELL students with gaining technical vocabulary for career readiness in their native language and English.

This is a high range score

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	8
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(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The consortium has a high-quality plan for supporting the project through the infrastructure of the consortium partners. For example, the applicant identified access to resources, especially technology, as essential for success of this project. Their plan calls for preparing and allocating resources to the Homework, Project and Technology Centers within the 2nd and 3rd quarters of the first year. This includes hiring and training staff, preparing the physical space, etc. These centers are essential to providing participating students, parents and families access to the technological resources and content support (e.g., tutoring) that can facilitate personalized learning, regardless of income. That these centers will run outside of school hours and be staffed also ensures that stakeholders, especially parents and the families of students, will have appropriate levels of technical support. This support will be enhanced by online and peer support, though no specifics were given about these.

The student information systems that are currently in place in each of the districts will be enhanced within a funded project to allow parents to access student level data at any time from their home or the HPT Centers. Data will include student test scores, learning plans, and course enrollment. No mention was made of how or whether these data might be used with other electronic learning systems.

The consortium will be challenged to create an interoperable data system since their current systems do not speak to each other. The member districts have already engaged in conversation on this and are committed to working with their educational service center to program a data system that will meet the requirements of the grant with a common established structure that will interface with those district-specific operating systems for measures and data not currently covered by the state system.

This is a high mid-range score

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score

(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	11
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant addresses unique challenges in managing a consortium. In order to do so, they propose creating both a Board of Trustees and a strategic planning/advisory council to be formed to provide regular ongoing feedback during implementation of the project; no specifics were provided as to the makeup of each of these groups, though there was language to identify that they would be representative. The Board will meet monthly to review progress on the program, identify challenges, delegate tasks and problem solve issues raised. The strategic planning/advisory council will meet quarterly to ensure attention to details of implementation, monitor progress, and ensure an ongoing communication loop among educators and stakeholders. The Board will be responsible for initiating a formal continuous improvement protocol that will be informed by Program staff at the monthly meetings. A detailed description of the relationship of the staff to the Board in terms of reporting is provided in the narrative and demonstrates the ways in which the two entities will work together to analyze data and adjust programming as needed. The program staff and board will use the data dashboards to measure and monitor progress and all Board meetings will be announced in advance and open to the public; monthly budget updates will also be publicly available so that stakeholders can monitor the use of funds. While the plan itself demonstrates a multi-pronged approach to planning, specifics about the makeups of the board and strategic planning/advisory committees would have given additional assurances that the representations have sufficient authority to make adjustments and revisions. This is a high mid-range score.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides a comprehensive and varied plan for communicating with internal and external partners. Newsletters will be shared at the school level for both sets of stakeholders. These will be posted electronically, in addition to being sent home with students. The consortium will establish a project website and this will be used to complement each district's website in providing information about project implementation. A project Wiki will be established that will allow for two-way communication among community members. The staff will also develop a project app that will allow information to be pushed out to hand-held devices. Face-to-face events will be planned specifically for the project staff to interact with students and families and updates will be provided at board meetings. This is a high score response.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The consortium has chosen 15 performance measures. They have included both academic performance measures (e.g., passing rates on STAAR assessments) and non-academic measures (e.g., Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire [SDQ] to assess and track behavioral and social status of students). They set a standard of meeting or exceeding state averages for student performance on outcome measures as their goal for all students and subgroups. This is defensible and they provide a clear rationale that the consortium as a whole performs below state averages on current outcomes. The lack of development and validation of new state tests limits the data upon which the applicant can identify the specifics of particular target goals and they should not be penalized for this lack of specifics. They chose the SDQ as a more robust measure of student behavioral development (as opposed to using a more traditional measure like student discipline referrals) and have the potential to use data gathered from this to more effectively identify students in need of support and intervene within their Rtl structure to improve personalization of services. Overall, the applicant has varied measures that are appropriately differentiated by grade bands and, in sum, will indicate the success of the project in helping students to become college and career-ready. They provide 220 pages of performance measures disaggregated by school then by student subgroup for consideration. This is a high score.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant identifies dual entities that will evaluate the effectiveness of the investments. The first line of evaluation will be in the hands of the Board of Trustees as they engage with program staff to review funded activities. The Board has agreed to hire an external evaluator who can provide an independent set of eyes on the investments. The external evaluator will guide program staff in the types of data necessary to be collected to meet federal expectations for reporting. The evaluator will review formative reports on activities and develop an annual summative report that will cover the use of time, staffing, and the allocation of resources in implementing the program. The evaluator will also develop surveys that will be disseminated to internal and external stakeholders to gauge their perceptions of program effectiveness on the use of technology and the implementation of new practices. Also, the evaluator will be responsible for examining districts' progress on implementing the new evaluation system as outlined in the plan. The dual structure nature of the plan should provide an iterative feedback loop that can assist the Board with making continuous improvements. This is a high score.</p>		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	6
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The budget identifies local and grant funds necessary to implement the proposed outcomes. The detailed budget shows careful planning of the use of funds to implement the major initiatives that will impact student learning and school reform and most of those appear to be appropriate and justified. One-time investments for technology for implementing blended learning, for instance, is made in year one, then there are no further equipment investments through the life of the grant. This is appropriate so that all students and teachers will have access to the equipment that is essential to successful implementation. The coaching budget, however, is an example of yearly funding that was unclear to this reviewer. The narrative states that 49 coaches, one for each school, will be hired. Yet the amount to fund these changes from year one to two and three, returning back to year one funding in year 4. There is no mention of phasing this in or out and the narrative does not explain the differences. In addition, the amounts in years one and four do not appear to be sufficient for covering the costs of the coaches and there is no indication in the budget that district funds will be used to supplement grant funds. Overall, the general appropriateness of the budget is in line with the intent but is hampered by the lack of planning for the database and is a mid-range score.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	7
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant indicates a willingness to creatively use current and potential future funding streams to continue success that may be achieved through the implementation of the RttT-D grant. Typical sources of funding were identified, including Title I funds available to most of the consortium schools, and other federal and state sources of funding. The use of Title Ia and IIa funds to continue supporting the instructional coaches demonstrates a significant investment in sustaining the capacity that has been built as a result of the federal funding of their proposal; it is unclear, however, why the number of coaches was reduced to 31 from the 49 proposed in the grant, nor how those will be distributed among consortium members. They provide a three-year budget and source of funds that extends beyond the life of the grant that will provide funding for some of these projects that may enhance work begun under RttT-D. Of special note is the intent to provide \$500,000/year to sustain the HPT Centers, a key to making access to resources available to parents and students, regardless of income. While recognizing appropriately that many of the costs that were incurred as part of the implementation of the grant activities will be low- or no-cost funding in the future because of the integration of the practices into the school cultures, the narrative is somewhat vague about how they will fund those elements that are deemed critical to success, merely stating that future monies will be redirected to these elements. One critical personnel that was not explicitly identified in the sustainability plan was the data coordinator; this position was identified as critical in the budget for the project but is not apparent in years following. The sustainability plan also lacks some of the specifics of a high quality plan, including persons responsible and timelines for securing external funds that were identified as potential sources of funding for critical elements. Because the time factor is so far out, however, this latter point was a minor concern to this reviewer in assigning a high mid-level score.</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	7
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The lead district in the consortium has an extensive background in community and school transformation supported by an ongoing relationship with the Annie E. Casey Foundation. They also mention partnering with unnamed local nonprofit agencies and the 21st Century Academic Program to extend learning time for at-risk students. They propose to provide technical assistance to other consortium members in developing their own partnerships to support community transformation by targeting a variety of populations for specific activities. These include working with entering kindergarteners to improve literacy skills, exiting third graders with the goal of ensuring they are reading at grade level, and graduating high school seniors to be certain they are college and career ready. They provide 29 pages of charts that indicate specific targets disaggregated by school and subgroups. Specific tools and resources to assess students are identified and training has been planned for within the grant activities. No mention is made of any current partnership that other districts in the consortium have that can be built upon or extended and the lead organization provides limited information on any other partnerships it has that would qualify it as an exemplar and able to provide technical support. This is not to denigrate the work done within the Casey Foundation parameters but the narrative could have benefited from more wide-ranging elaboration. This is a mid-range score.</p>		

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met
<p>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant, if funded, has demonstrated a clear and comprehensive plan to address core educational areas that could create learning environments personalized for individual students and could significantly improve teaching and learning. The track record over the past four years shows a consortium that is making use of data and has documented successes with some of the populations of interest to the grant. While there is still much work to be done, especially with certain subgroups, most notably with certain subgroups in specific schools, the consortium identifies structures will be in place through RttT-D funding; they have also demonstrated collaborative planning that will enhance the structures that already exist within consortium members' districts and schools. The use of student data with a comprehensive data warehouse and the dashboards proposed could increase access to real-time data use for parents, students and educators. There are demonstrated successes with college-bound Hispanics that provide support for students' dreams of attending college if they are successful in school. More attention provided to non-college bound students is also likely to be implemented through the career awareness strategies. Students are also likely to develop deep learning through blended learning and project-based activities once they have achieved the basic literacy foundation proposed in the grant.</p>		
Total	210	171



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0970TX-3 for Edgewood Independent School District of San Antonio

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant identifies five conceptual themes that taken together provide a comprehensive and coherent reform vision and clearly link to the four core educational assurance areas. The conceptual themes provide specific details illustrating the type of activities, strategies and structures to be employed. Furthermore, the applicant articulates a structure within the consortium that yields great potential in providing a collaborative network of schools committed to achieving the vision articulated in this proposal.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant identified the process used to select the districts to participate and ultimately the schools. Each school is listed with the total number of participating students, participating students from low-income families, participating students who are high-need students and participating educators. In short, each of the criteria identified above have been met.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	10

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a clear strategy for scaling the project beyond the consortium to include leveraging the consortium schools relationship with the local Education Service District. Furthermore, the applicant articulates a theory of action specific to supporting students as they aspire to be college and career ready. The component parts of the theory of action includes (a) changing the approach to teaching and learning, (b) involving parents as partners in their child's learning, (c) implementing frequent and formative assessments to inform interventions, and (d) integrating technology to deepen, personalize, and support the learning experience. Finally, the applicant articulates a strategy or theory of action specific to change (the John Kotter 8 step change management model).

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)

10

8

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides both ambitious and achievable annual goals for each LEA within the consortium. The lack of proficiency status was articulated based on the fact that the State has yet to establish proficiency levels on the new assessment system.

The applicant articulates ambitious annual goals specific to reducing the achievement gaps between various subgroups and the States average for white students. The goals are ambitious yet may not be achievable as described as they require an annual reduction of 50% from the previous year. It is unrealistic to think that each district will achieve the level of reduction necessary within a three year peirod.

The applicant identifies graduation rates that are both ambitious and achievable and have identified college enrollment for districts currently connected to the National Clearinghouse. Those districts not enrolled with the Clearinghouse will do so within a defined time period of the project being funded. The applicant also identifies post-secondary degree attainment will be monitored through the National Clearinghouse.

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	11
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant presents evidence of improved student learning outcomes, yet does not demonstrate a clear record of success in the past four years in advancing student learning and achievement across the LEAs within the consortium. The data provided in the appendix specific to graduation rates suggested most districts (as well as the State) has been increasing graduation rates over the past four years. The data specific to statewide assessments does not reflect a clear track record of success across the consortium.</p> <p>The applicant did not identify any persistently lowest achieving schools, though it did identify two low performing schools exist yet did not specify who those districts are by name.</p> <p>The applicant provides clear and compelling evidence that student performance data is available to students, educators and parents and that the consortium is committed to building out existing data systems within the lead district.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	5
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides evidence suggesting each of the school-level expenditures are made available to the public. This includes salary information at the school level for instructional purposes.</p>		

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides clear and compelling evidence that successful conditions and sufficient autonomy is provided under State legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements. Specifically, the applicant identifies key legal and regulatory authority as designated through the Texas Education Code (TEC) - a set of state statutes governing public education in Texas.</p>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	10
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant identified a variety of engagement strategies for students and families including Family Nights, Campus Parental Involvement sessions, PTA meetings, etc. At the meetings, families were provided information specific to the grant application and were given the opportunity to provide feedback.</p> <p>The applicant identified the process superintendents within each consortium district utilized to engage staff to include teachers, administrators and non-instructional personnel. As part of this process, teachers were provided a summary of intent, purpose, primary activities, and mission of the project and were asked to vote (yes or no) regarding their support of the project. 87% voted to support the project - well above the 70% threshold defined within this sections criteria.</p> <p>The applicant provided a variety of letters from key stakeholder groups from throughout the consortium and in support of the project.</p>		
(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	3
<p>(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provided an analysis that was conducted independently by each of the consortium LEAs. The analysis included identified needs and gaps that were common across the consortium.</p> <p>The described process did not clearly articulate a set of defined steps that each district used to conduct the need or gap analysis. The lack of clarity in terms of the process make it impossible to determine whether or not a high-quality plan for an analysis was used.</p>		

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	17
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides a high quality plan as reflected in the following criteria.</p> <p>C (a) (i) the use of thinking maps to produce a map of the future for students and families is a great tool for developing an understanding at the student and family level.</p> <p>C (a) (ii) the development and use of College and Career Readiness Plans and the link to an integrated data system will support meeting this particular criteria. Furthermore the Making College Feel Real is another strategy linked to this particular criteria.</p> <p>C (a) (iii) the use of both Blended Learning and Project based Learning provide the types of strategies necessary to provide deep learning experiences in areas of academic areas of interest to the student. The utilization of technology will support both the Blended Learning approach and PBL.</p> <p>C (a) (iv) the use of both Blended Learning and PBL with an infusion of technology will support student access and exposure to diverse cultures and contexts.</p> <p>C (a) (v) The overall plan presented in this section would suggest students will have a variety of opportunities to master critical content and develop skills and traits such as goal-setting, etc.</p> <p>C (b) (i-iii) The description specific to the applicants intent to personalize learning environments identifies a set of requirements for blending learning environments incorporating both technology and PBL. While many of the requirements are straight forward, the applicant identified the need for leaders to provide common planning time for collaboration and data</p>		

analysis yet does not provide specific examples of how district's might meet this requirement. Examples would help illustrate the possibilities of structural shifts in support of this initiative.

C (b) (iv) The applicant identifies the intent to build out an integrated data system that will support ongoing and regular feedback in relation to the students individualized plan.

C (b) (v) The applicant does not speak directly to specific efforts to accommodate specific needs of high-need students within a Blended Environment or within a Project-Based Learning Environment. While both of these approaches lend themselves to providing a level of universal accommodation - specific examples of strategies and structures within would have helped illustrate the applicants intent to meet this specific criteria.

The applicant's description of blended learning and PBL was extensive, though a description of the application of such strategies at the elementary, middle and high school levels would have been helpful. Specifically, it is difficult to generalize the description provided to elementary school classrooms and students.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	15
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant identifies professional learning communities at the consortium level, the district level and the school level to support professional development for all staff. This is an effective model assuming PLCs have been established and are functional.

The applicant identifies instructional coaching (at each site) as a key strategy to provide embedded professional development as well as hiring three coaches to support integrating technology. This approach supports embedded, just in time professional development that yields the potential to support the effective implementation of personalized learning environments.

Furthermore, the applicant identifies a coaching strategy (see one, try one, do one) and the desire to hire consultants to train the coaches to provide expert level support.

The applicant identifies the need to provide a data system capable of supporting teams of teachers at the classroom, school and district level. The applicant identifies a variety of strategies that will support the use of data for making informed, just in time decisions at the student level. A detailed description of the type of data (beyond summative, etc.) and specifics within the dashboard would have been helpful in illustrating a clear plan for how the data system will be put together.

The applicant articulates the intent to develop and implement effective evaluation systems across the consortium to ensure student success. While the applicant addressed the specific criteria associated with effective evaluation systems, the application fails to provide enough detail specific to how the evaluation system will be implemented. For example, evaluation systems can be a challenge to implement effectively if administrative structures and practices are not adjusted. Greater detail in this particular area would have strengthened this part of the application.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	11

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a clear governance structure for the consortium and identifies the project management structure connected to the lead LEA. Furthermore, the applicant provides an expected structure for school leadership teams in participating schools providing sufficient flexibility and autonomy.

The applicant identifies specific opportunities to allow students the opportunity to progress and earn credits based on mastery rather than seat time. The ability to demonstrate mastery at multiple times and multiple ways is stated - though the lack of specifics would suggest this particular aspect of the project has not been clearly defined or articulated.

The criteria specific to learning resources and instructional practices being adaptable and fully accessible does not provide sufficient information specific to targeted strategies or support. For example, how will the consortium ensure students with disabilities or ESL students will access the deep content via blended learning environments and in classrooms utilizing Project-

Based Learning. Significantly more information would have strengthened this particular section.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)

10

9

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a plan to ensure the necessary LEA and school infrastructures exists to support personalized learning. The concept of utilizing technology *boot camps* and the HTP Centers within each community clearly support the notion that the applicant intends to build the necessary supports for students, parents, and other stakeholders.

The applicant clearly articulates a plan to support the use of information technology systems for parents and students and to ensure that LEAs and schools use interoperable data systems. Specifically, the consortium will build upon an existing system (to include new enhancements) and will utilize services through the regional education service district to support personalized learning as articulated in this particular area.

This application would have been stronger had the applicant provided greater detail.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	12
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant articulates a clear strategy to support a continuous improvement process. The use of a Board of Trustees structure, with the articulated timelines and responsibilities provides evidence of such a strategy. Furthermore, the simple approach of <i>plan-do-check-adjust</i> that has been identified for use in support of continuous improvement supports the claim that a high-quality plan exists.</p> <p>The only concern specific to this section is lack of specific measures that will be monitored and ultimately shared. The application would have been stronger if there were specific implementation measures articulated that link to the specific goals of the application.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The identification of a variety of communication and engagement strategies coupled with the means from which the consortium engaged it's stakeholders in the development of the application provides evidence that a high quality plan exists.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	5
(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant provides a high-quality plan encompassing all of the required elements in this section.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	5
(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The governance structures proposed in the application and the specific strategies and processes (i.e. communication processes) provide evidence that the applicant has a high-quality plan to evaluate the effectiveness of the activities.</p>		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	10
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant presents a budget broken down into six projects. Each of the six projects meets the criteria established for this</p>		

section. In short, each of the six projects budgets seem to be both reasonable and sufficient to support the development and implementation. Furthermore, the budgets align with the priorities established within the full application and include an identification of one time investments as well as investments that will need to be sustained beyond the life of the grant.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)

10

7

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant did provide a post-grant budget that identified possible funding that would sustain the efforts of the project.

The applicant identifies several aspects of the grant project that would not need to be sustained. With that said, there are millions of dollars expended in new staff positions that will need to be sustained and will be a challenge to fund beyond the life of the grant. The applicant does not identify specific sustainability plans for these positions or any type of *stepdown* in the number of coaches needed post-grant.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	9

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a clear vision and plan for the integration of various agencies (public, private and non-profit) to support the articulated student level indicators. The proposal addresses all six criteria identified in the competitive priority section. The only area that was not fully developed relates to criteria 5. specifically, the description of how this work would build the capacity of staff within schools was mentioned, yet more specific information would have been helpful.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a coherent and comprehensive plan to personalize the learning environment for all students across the consortium. Evidence of the plan can be found in subsection C (1 and 2). The vision of the consortium, coupled with the elements of the plan articulated within the proposal would suggest students will be well served and that student achievement will be accelerated within and across the consortium of schools.

Total	210	182
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